

house" is a synonymous translation. Bearing in mind the scriptural definition of the church, "a congregation of faithful men," the selection of a room as the model for the conventicle, or church, as it was sometimes called, and the fact that this model was so completely opposed to those for all previous places of public worship, who can resist the conclusion that this primitive church model, adopted all but universally for the first seven centuries, was considered the most suitable for the due exposition of Christian doctrine; and being suitable then, why is it not suitable now? How is it that there is such a marvellous difference in primitive church plans from mediæval church plans? Are they both suited for the rites and doctrines respectively taught in them? Then, if so, they afford the most striking evidence of an astounding difference in the respective religious systems which could dictate two such opposite ideas of religious worship as are embodied in a basilican "conventicle," and a Gothic cathedral.

The former structure negatives the very idea of any distinct class of priests, or of any material sacrifice, either without the other being, to Jew or Pagan, a transparent mockery; but the Christian converts, imbued from infancy with Pagan notions, living in an atmosphere of Paganism, were subject to fearful temptations to mix and entwine Pagan errors with Christian truth. Slowly and insidiously did such perversions creep in, but it took many centuries before they obtained such hold of the church as to induce the alteration in church plans which eventually took place. The old precedents were in too great numbers in Italy to admit there of that vital change in doctrine effecting corresponding changes in church arrangements; and it is therefore in countries converted after the errors had obtained away, that we find these errors building themselves significant abiding places in the great churches and cathedrals of the middle ages, which thus became so many petrifications of the corruptions so awfully deforming the pure features of Christianity. Wherever the old basilican conventicles exist, there we find that every thing in them lending the least countenance to corrupt views of Christianity are innovations, "unreal," having no connection with the structure; but in France, England, Germany, there we find these innovations becoming essential in the framework constructed portion of it; there we find chancels growing into "transubstantiators;" low railings growing into exclusive screens; the wooden moveable table petrified, and transmogrified into a constructed altar; there we find those whom the apostles addressed as "partakers of the heavenly calling, kings and priests unto God," abjectly, pitifully degraded from their high position, and their ministers, changed into priests, boasting that their proper position was with their feet on the necks of kings,—a state of things which fully justified Bishop Dunsæus in asserting that the pavement of the nave symbolized the people who were to be trodden under foot, while the chancel symbolized the priests who were to be held in great honour.

Will Mr. Pugin venture to put on paper any explanation of the extraordinary difference between the ancient model and that which he so zealously advocates and so coolly calls "Catholic?" Will he venture to give a common-sense reason for designating a style as "Pagan," or "Christian?" Plans of religious structures have been originated or influenced by doctrines, but no style of architecture ever was; and the absurdity of supposing such a thing is as great as that of maintaining a book to be Pagan if written in a tongue once invented or used by Pagans. The exquisite beauties of the Gothic style I most fully admit and enthusiastically admire, but I utterly deny its connection with the spiritualities of Christianity.

JOHN ELLIOTT.

REBUILDING OF THE TEMPLE OF JERUSALEM.—It is stated in the *Berliner Allgemeine Kirchen Zeitung*, that the Jews have obtained a firman from the Porte, granting them permission to build a temple on Mount Zion. The projected edifice is to equal Solomon's temple in magnificence. Millions of money are said to have been collected for this purpose in America alone. (?)

#### REMARKS ON THE ASSYRIAN SCULPTURES DISCOVERED BY DR. LAYARD, AND ON SOME PECULIARITIES OF ASSYRIAN ARCHITECTURE.\*

THIS style of art which characterizes all the ornaments on the marbles now in the British Museum offers us a subject of curious inquiry. What relation does it bear to other styles? To what extent is it original? And to what extent does it appear to have influenced other succeeding styles known to us? Major Rawlinson, who has fortunately succeeded in mastering to a great extent the difficulties that have hitherto hidden from us the knowledge handed down in the strange characters that cover these and other remains, entertains no doubt that the earlier ruins from whence these sculptures have been derived bear the extraordinary date of twelve or thirteen centuries before the Christian era. The sculpture therefore is probably as old as most of the Egyptian antiquities we possess; yet the style of the ornaments, although certainly partaking somewhat of Egyptian character, is in many respects widely different from it. The borders of the linen wrought in successive stripes, and those stripes subdivided into a succession of squares, is certainly an Egyptian peculiarity, prevalent in this Assyrian costume. Indeed the people of the two countries, although widely separated from each other, may most probably have interchanged commodities, and goods of so portable a kind as bales of linen may well have found their way from Egypt to Assyria. We have the incontestable and contemporary evidence of Ezekiel, that Egypt furnished "fine linen with embroidered work" to the merchants of Tyre, who it may be presumed supplied the markets of Nineveh.

The honey-suckle ornament so abundantly used in the sculpture under consideration is, I believe, nowhere seen in early Egyptian work. Nor are there any traces of resemblance between Assyrian and Egyptian design in the beautifully and freely-drawn figures of animals so profusely introduced into their work by Assyrian artists. We seek in vain here for those stiff and formal and very peculiar ornaments round the neck, consisting of a continued repetition of strokes of the pencil, which we see constantly recurring in Egyptian work, especially on the mummy cases. The Assyrian artist seems to have completely relieved himself from the rigid conventional manner of the Egyptian, and to have acquired considerable facility and freedom of execution: examine the slightly etched figures of winged bulls and other animals pervading the dresses of almost all the larger figures on the sculpture, and we find them drawn, or rather sketched, in a style that would do credit to the best artists of the present day; and when we consider the enormous extent to which this mode of decorating the walls of their buildings prevailed, not only at Nineveh, but at other buried cities which have been recently explored in the same country, it seems fair to presume that the trifling and very subordinate details to which I have been adverting must have been the work of common and ordinary artisans.

Let us now compare the ornaments under review with the more familiar forms of Greek art; and here I think we find so strong an analogy, and in some cases such a striking resemblance, as to force upon us the conclusion that the artists of Greece derived far more of their art from the banks of the Tigris and Euphrates than from the banks of the Nile; and Egypt must, I think, relinquish a large portion of the honour that has been so long accorded to her of having been the mother of Greek art. The honey-suckle ornament already alluded to as occurring abundantly in this sculpture is both in form and treatment almost purely Greek.

The Guilloche scroll, so characteristic a Greek ornament, occurs very accurately chased on the scabbard of one of the swords of the Assyrian warriors. An ornament much resembling (although not identical with) the labyrinth, also appears etched as an ornament on a dress. The classical enrichment, commonly called the head and reel, is here of very common occurrence. The running ornament of animals and foliage grouped together, constantly occurring in this costume, is a perfectly classical feature.

\* Part of a paper read at ordinary meeting of the Institute of Architects, 14th ult.

While inviting attention to the germ and gradual growth of that beautiful system of decoration which has been handed down to us by the Greek artists and has been the object of imitation during succeeding ages, not excluding even the mediæval age, I am tempted to suggest whether much of it, perhaps almost the whole of it, may not have had its origin in the use of sacred emblems or in the representation of sacred objects.

The bull was deified in the earliest ages, and we see it carved in profuse variety as an ornament on these marbles. It occurs abundantly in the sculpture of Asia Minor, and in classic art became a favourite ornament. The lion, also, furnishes us with another very familiar instance of an animal deified by the Egyptians, and introduced by the artist in every variety of form as an ornament. The honey-suckle, which, under the wonderful influence of Greek taste, became so beautiful and so universal an ornament, is here found many centuries before the birth of Greek art, as representing the sacred tree before which the Assyrian priest is performing his religious rites. The fir cone, which plays so prominent a part in classical decorative sculpture, is in these marbles almost always held as an offering in the hand of the priest. The lotus is another familiar instance. We find it first the object of worship in Egypt, but afterwards converted into one of the most beautiful of all the forms of antique ornament.

The rosette, or patera, is perhaps one of the most universal ornaments in the whole range of art. It occurs in the paintings of the Egyptians, and is carved on Hindoo sculpture; it was embroidered on the garments of the Assyrians, and ornamented their armlets, bracelets, and even their whip-handles. Nor on the sculptured remains of Persepolis is it wanting. The rosette is painted on the fictile vases of all ages, from the earliest to the latest, and has ever been one of the most common of all the ornaments of architecture. May I not venture to claim for this form, also, a sacred origin? The winged circle was the emblem of the deity in Egypt, Assyria, and Babylonia. It occurs frequently in the marbles before us, and is usually filled in with what has the appearance of a rosette, but, when the circle is large, we find the inserted figure to have a star-like form, or a radiation of tapering flames: may this not be supposed to typify the sun, the great and earliest object of idolatry? Is it not at least a plausible hypothesis that this figure, whether it be a conventional representation of the sun, or a star, may, in the course of time, have assumed, in the hands of the artificer, the varied and beautiful ornament with which we are so familiar?

Dr. Layard has remarked with truth on the very wide difference existing between the style of Assyrian architecture developed in these remains, and the architecture of Egypt. There appears here to have been an almost total absence of columns. Dr. Layard gives us a representation of one instance occurring in a bas-relief found in the ruins at Khorsabad, which he presumes to be of later date than those at Nimrod; and in the slabs in the British Museum one example occurs, wherein three pillars are introduced, but of proportions so slender as to lead to the presumption that they were of wood; a supposition the more probable, as they appear to support, not a horizontal entablature, but the frame-work of a kind of tent: it is worthy of remark, that these pillars have as their capital the horns of the goat so arranged as to suggest at once the Ionic capital, and the Khorsabad example is also of this type.

The absence of columns may possibly be due, in great measure, to the flat, alluvial character of the district between the Tigris and Euphrates, which furnished the soft alabaster of which these slabs are formed, but no hard building stone suitable for columnar architecture. Rooms, however, 35 feet and 40 feet wide, such as occur in the palaces explored by Dr. Layard, would not have been roofed over without a greater degree of constructive skill in carpentry than we have any reason to suppose was possessed in these early ages. Perhaps, therefore, the horizontal beams of which the roof was formed may have been supported by wooden pillars which are now perished, or which may have been burnt when these temples were sacked,—a fate which most